

FAREWELL TO SOMERSET, HELLO CHAPEL HILL

Few would deny that it's terrible to say goodbye
Particularly to our closest friends
 or allies
whom, not even our fondest passions
could ever transcend

But, in the process there are true benefits
Which when codified and pondered, lead
one to believe, at least where I sit,
that all those years in our present abode
formed a sturdy scaffold which,
rich in its tapestry of companions
 and myriad events,
have enriched, even enobled our lives
to such large extents
that goodbyes or hellos
are mere punctuation that serve to demarcate time and place
but have no more significance,
my dear fellows
than the twitch of an eyebrow, the shrug of
a shoulder or,
 even bolder
-and this may seem disloyal~
such as when the blade takes its morsel
and the baby cries at the hands of the
 moyel

Tears, tears, they must be shed
I hear some under their breath mutter
but, why should the lacrimal gland
be any more significant than a cow's utter?
after all, the former simply relieves us of our endorphins
while the latter forces the child to seek its
 mother

Be all of us happy and not fret
for, after all, we are not leaving this planet
 at least, not yet
nor are we embarking for Shadyhill,
the town of which John Cheever wrote
as being full of drunks, rakes, and forsooth (in Paul's honor)
 the mentally ill.

No we are going not far away to

Chapel Hill
with its lofty college spires
its graceful elms sheltering
minds and ideas to which we all aspire.
Hooray, we are off to a new adventure
hopefully with newly found friends
with knowledge, to be sure,
although with present company not as secure.

We raise our glasses to
Selma and Paul
To our children, including Doug, and Sarah,
and those surely to come;
to all our Somerset Friends
and our colleagues from NIH
From whom I apparently cannot escape
and finally to our lovely home
with its graceful landscape.

There will be no goodbyes
No tearful farewells
Our love
our respect for values and character
Our feelings about grace and beauty
our sense of the past, our hopes for the future
They remain fixed in time and space
protected for posterity
As if covered with the illusory carapace
of eternity